



How to give and take advice



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

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If you find any errors or corrections that need
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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Glossary



جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

Mutual Advising

Chapter One

A — The Aim of This Course

Advising others and seeking advice from them is a fundamental aspect of our religion, which we know to be obligatory.



However, many of us are unaware of the proper way to engage in this practice.

In this course, we will learn how to give and receive beneficial advice in a manner that reduces the likelihood of displeasing Allah سبحانه وتعالى and falling into sin, while also maximising the effectiveness of our advice.

Furthermore, we will explore ways to alleviate some of the challenges associated with both giving and receiving advice.

To achieve these goals, our aim is to adhere to the guidelines found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

B — General Guidelines Regarding Giving and Taking Advice

Allah says in the Qur'an that if we fail to do certain good deeds, we will be in a state of loss:

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝

By Al-'Asr (the time) (1) Verily, man is in loss, (2) Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar which Allâh has forbidden], and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihâd). (3)

Surah Al-'Asr 1-3

The word "وَتَوَّاصَ وَأُ" (to enjoin or advise) is mentioned separately from believing and doing good deeds, even though it falls under the category of doing good deeds. This is because advising is a distinct process that involves acquiring knowledge, acting upon it, and subsequently sharing it with others.

C — Guidelines for Offering and Receiving Advice

“The first mistake people often make when giving advice is forgetting themselves.”

Allah admonishes us by saying:

- 1 أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ
- So know (O Muhammad ﷺ) that, Lâ ilâha illallâh (none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh), and ask forgiveness for your sin [...]**

Surah Muhammad 19

Allah سبحانه وتعالى commanded the Prophet ﷺ to first have knowledge of "Laa ilaaha illallaah" before doing an action, such as seeking forgiveness.

It is for this reason that Al-Imam Al-Bukhaari mentioned this Ayah in a chapter titled "Knowledge Comes Before Statements and Actions."

From the two verses quoted above, we understand that the person giving advice must possess sufficient knowledge to offer it. Additionally, he should act upon his own advice.

On the other hand, the person receiving advice should be willing to accept it as long as it is sound. Even if the advisor fails to act upon his own advice, the recipient should not disregard it.

Although the advisor may be criticised for not practising what he enjoins, it is essential to note that concealing knowledge and refraining entirely from giving advice is even more detrimental.

D — Combining Between Giving and Taking Advice

The word "وَتَوَاصَوْا" not only means to give advice but also encompasses the idea of exchanging advice with each other. Therefore, the correct approach is to both give and receive advice.

Many individuals are quick to offer advice but hesitant to accept it themselves. This practice is incorrect.

E — Advising with Truth

Allah سبحانه وتعالى says, "وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ", meaning "advise each other with the truth."

Offering advice based on false premises, incorrect knowledge, or a false impression of the person in question serves no purpose. Genuine advice must be grounded in truth.

F — Advising with Patience

Allah سبحانه وتعالى also says, “وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ”, meaning “They advise each other with patience.”

Offering and receiving advice can be tough. People might reject it or respond harshly, so we need patience.

It is important to understand that if our goal in giving advice is to please the person receiving it, we may end up feeling disappointed. But when we offer it with the intention of pleasing Allah سبحانه وتعالى, the reactions of others will not bother us, and we will be rewarded by Allah سبحانه وتعالى.

Part of exercising patience during the advising process is avoiding haram behaviours. For instance, it is easy to lose one's temper or become upset when giving advice.

Remember that the Prophet ﷺ said:

2

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ إِمَّا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ

The strong man is not one who wrestles well but the strong man is one who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage.

Sahih Muslim 2609a

This principle also extends to the recipient of advice. For instance, if someone is given advice in an impolite or hurtful manner, they should still consider taking the advice (if it is valuable) without becoming upset or offended by the manner in which it was presented.

Sincerity in Advising

Chapter Two

1 — Hadeeth of Tameem Ad-Daaree

In this chapter, we will discuss the hadeeth of Abee Ruqayyah Tameem Ibn Aws Ad-Daaree رضي الله عنه.

He narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

1

"الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ" قُلْنَا لِمَنْ قَالَ "لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأُمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ"

"The Religion is Naṣeeḥah." We said, "To whom?" He said, "To Allah, to His Book, To His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their masses."

Sahih Muslim 55a

2 — The Meaning of نصيحة (Naṣeeḥah)

“Naṣeeḥah” The word النُّصْح (An-Nuṣḥ) in the Arabic Language means الْخُلُوص (Al-Khuloos), meaning to be pure or sincere.

To explain the concept of Naṣeeḥah, scholars have given the following 3 definitions:

A Definition One

إرادة الخير للمنصوح له

Wanting good for the one who receives the Naṣeeḥah.

B Definition Two

عناية القلب للمنصوح له كائننا من كان

It is for your heart to pay attention and give care to the one that the Naṣeeḥah is going to.

C Definition Three

Ibn As-Ṣalaah's definition

كلمة جامعة تتضمن قيام الناصح للمنصوح له بوجوه الخير إرادة وفعلا

It is a comprehensive term which means that the person giving Naṣeeḥah combines every kind of goodness to benefit the person receiving it. It includes a willingness to benefit the recipient and an action or a deed that will benefit him.

3 — Naṣeeḥah With Regards to the People

The essence of Naṣeeḥah lies in wanting good for others and doing good for them.

01

Wanting Good

As Ibn As-Ṣalaah mentioned, wanting Khayr for the person should be our intention when giving Naṣeeḥah.

A BIG mistake people make when giving advice is that their intentions are not good. They do not want the recipient of advice to improve. Nor do they think about the way they offer advice.

Therefore, when contemplating offering advice to someone, we should ask ourselves:

- Am I doing it because I want good for them?
- Or is it only because it is expected of me?
- Is my aim to make them feel bad or regretful?
- Or am I trying to assert my superiority over them?

Never forget that the first pillar Naṣeeḥah stands on is the willingness to do Khayr. So, if you are advising people, do it because you truly care about their well-being.

This approach will lead you to offer Naṣeeḥah to them in the same way you would offer it to yourself.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

لا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.

Sahih al-Bukhari 13

02

Doing Good

Once you have purified your intention, your primary focus should be on providing advice that yields positive results.

The way you give advice must be consistent with both the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and your intention (your actions should show that you are advising them for the sake of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى)).

Therefore, the next question you need to ask yourself is, “How can I offer advice to this person in a way that suits him?”

To achieve this, you must first get to know the individual. Applying wisdom, consider the most effective way to communicate with him when providing Naṣeeḥah - whether it is through a letter, a one-on-one conversation, and so on. Also, think about the best time to approach him.

Give advice in a manner that encourages him to willingly accept it.

03

Sincerity Towards Every Muslim

Some of the Sahaabah رضي الله عنهم used to say:

بَايَعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى إِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالنُّصْحِ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

I gave a pledge of allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ that I will perform the prayer, give the zakaah, and be sincere towards every Muslim.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1401

Sincerity, as we mentioned, encompasses:

1

Desiring good for the people

2

Ensuring that your actions toward them align with your intention and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ

Sincerity should extend to everyone. It should not be limited to our close friends.



**Sincerity should
extend to everyone.**

It should not be limited to our close friends.

Statements of the Salaf



Chapter Three

A Sufyaan Ath-Thawree's Advice to 'Abbaad ibn 'Abbaad Al-Khawwaas

Sufyaan once said to 'Abbaad ibn 'Abbaad Al-Khawwaas:

و إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ كَمَنْ يَحِبُّ أَنْ يُعْمَلَ بِقَوْلِهِ أَوْ يُنْشَرَ
قَوْلُهُ أَوْ يُسْمَعَ قَوْلُهُ فَإِذَا تَرَكَ ذَاكَ مِنْهُ عُرِفَ فِيهِ

Beware of being like someone who likes his words to be acted upon, spread around, or listened to. And if this desire is not fulfilled, it becomes apparent in your character.

Benefits From the Statement:

- **Our primary focus should not be whether our Naṣeeḥah gains widespread recognition or whether people act upon it. Instead, our concern should revolve around the manner in which we deliver advice and the purity of our intentions.**
- **Avoid commanding your brother and becoming upset if he does not heed your counsel. Instead, offer advice discreetly and seek excuses for them if they choose not to act upon it.**

B The Advice of 'Abbaad Ibn 'Abbaad to the Muslims

'Abbaad Ibn 'Abbaad said:

ولا تعيبوا بالبدع تزينا بعيبها فإن فساد أهل البدع ليس بزائد في صلاحكم.
ولا تعيبوها بغيا على أهلها فإن البغي من فساد أنفسكم. وليس ينبغي للطبيب أن يداوي
المرضى بما يبرئهم ويمرضه. فإنه إذا مرض اشتغل بمرضه عن مداواتهم. ولكن ينبغي أن يلتمس
لنفسه الصحة ليقوى به على علاج المرضى. فليكن أمركم فيما تنكرون على إخوانكم نظرا منكم
لأنفسكم ونصيحة منكم لربكم وشفقة منكم على إخوانكم. وأن تكونوا مع ذلك بعيوب
أنفسكم أعنى بعيوب غيركم. وأن يستطعم بعضكم بعضا النصيحة وأن يحظى عندكم من
بذلها لكم وقبلها منكم. وقد قال عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه: "رحم الله من أهدى إلي
عيوبي." تحبون أن تقولوا فيحتمل لكم وإن قيل لكم مثل الذي قلتم غضبتم. تجدون على
الناس فيما تنكرون من أمورهم وتأتون مثل ذلك أفلا تحبون أن يؤخذ عليكم. اتهموا رأيكم
ورأي أهل زمانكم وتثبتوا قبل أن تكلموا وتعلموا قبل أن تعملوا...

Do not criticise innovations in order to elevate yourself, for indeed, criticising the people of innovation will not increase your righteousness. Do not criticise them to transgress against the people, for transgression (against them) is from your own corruption.

It is not appropriate for a doctor aiming to heal others to administer a medicine that cures them while afflicting himself. For if the doctor becomes sick, he will become concerned with his sickness and will no longer be able to cure them. But he should try to be healthy himself so he will be better able to treat the sick.

When you must critique your brother, approach it as if you are examining yourself. Let your sincerity to Allah be evident, and let it stem from your genuine concern for your brother. Despite all this, remember that your primary concern should be your own flaws rather than those of others. Embrace advice from one another, honour those who offer it, and accept it with grace.

As 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) once said, 'May Allah have mercy upon the one who gifts me by revealing my errors.' You desire your counsel to be heeded, yet when the same counsel is directed at you, you become angry. You notice mistakes in others that you consider wrongful, yet you commit the same errors. Do you then wish for others to hold you accountable for those very faults? Consider your own opinions critically and evaluate the views of your contemporaries. Make sure of things before you speak. Seek knowledge before you assume the role of a teacher...

Benefits From the Statement:

- **Strive to strike a harmonious balance: do not forsake the rejection of falsehood, yet refrain from making the pursuit of finding faults your ultimate goal.**
- **Show genuine care for those you advise through your actions. [Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Baaz رحمهما الله had such a remarkable way of refuting deviant individuals that even their adversaries acknowledged their sincere desire for the well-being of those they were refuting.]**
- **Focus on addressing your own shortcomings rather than fixating on the faults and shortcomings of others.**
- **Always verify the accuracy of advice before giving or accepting it.**
- **Be open to offering advice as well as receiving it.**
- **Cultivate knowledge before assuming the role of a teacher.**

The original statement by 'Abbaad ibn 'Abbaad can be found in the book *Sunan Ad-Darimi*.

Advising Someone With Authority

Chapter Four

1 — The Ḥadeeth of ‘Iyaad ibn Ghanam رضي الله عنه

This chapter will be based on the following ḥadeeth narrated by ‘Iyaad ibn Ghanam رضي الله عنه.

He narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

- 1
- من أراد أن ينصح لذي سلطان بأمر فلا يبد له علانية ولكن يأخذ بيده فيخلو به فإن قبل منه فذاك وإلا كان قد أدى الذي عليه
- Whoever wants to advise someone in authority, do not criticise them in public. Rather take them by their hand and speak to them in private. If they accept your advice, then that is good. And if not, you have done what you have to do.
- Musnad Ahmad

Benefits From this Hadith:

- Criticising or advising someone who has authority over you like your father or the leader of the muslims should not be done in public
- Advising someone with authority should be done in private and with gentle words as Moosaa عليه السلام did with Fir’aun.

One of the Khulafaa’, when someone advised and criticised him openly, said, “I’m not worse than Fir’aun and you are not better than Moosaa.” He was referring to Allah’s سبحانه وتعالى instruction to Moosaa when He sent him to Fir’aun:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

"And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear (Allâh)."

Surah Taha 44

- Allah سبحانه وتعالى also gives us the example of how Ibraaheem عليه السلام advised his father in a gentle manner:

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا

O my father! Verily there has come to me of the knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me, I will guide you to the Straight Path.

Surah Maryam 43

- Once you have offered advice to the person in authority, as mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, your responsibility is fulfilled. Whether the person in authority accepts or disregards your advice is up to him.
- Even if the person in charge does not take your advice, it is still not a reason to publicly criticise them later.
- If the person in authority receives advice in an inappropriate manner, he should still accept it if the advice itself is valid and correct.

2 — What Happened to Usaamah ibn Zaid

It was said to Usaamah ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه:

2

قِيلَ لَهُ "أَلَا تَدْخُلُ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ فَتُكَلِّمُهُ" فَقَالَ "أَتُرَوْنَ أَيِّ لَا أُكَلِّمُهُ إِلَّا أَسْمِعُكُمْ؟ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ كَلَّمْتُهُ فِيمَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ مَا دُونَ أَنْ أَفْتَتِحَ أَمْرًا لَا أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ فَتَحَهُ" ...

“Why haven’t you gone to speak to ‘Uthmaan to advise him?” He said, “Do you think I only talk to him when you people can hear me? I swear by Allah I spoke to him privately between me and him. I do not want to be the first person to open the door of trouble...”

Sahih al-Bukhari 3267

Ibn Hajar says in Fath Al-Baaree about the statement “I do not want to be the first person to open the door of trouble”, “Usaamah means he does not want to open the door of publicly criticising the ruler.”

This statement is not limited to criticising leaders like 'Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him) or the Muslim leader; it applies to anyone in authority over us, including our parents, teachers, and elders, among others.



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